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AUG 19 2016

EPA-REGION 10



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U.S. EPA  
ATTN: Harbor Comments  
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500  
Portland, OR 97205

I am a believer in trying the least invasive and least potentially harmful solution to a problem first. I am familiar with the EPA's plan to clean up the Willamette River, and it takes exactly the opposite approach. By dredging up parts of a 10-mile portion of the river, they will not only spend upwards of a billion dollars, they will negatively impact businesses and residents in the process.

My business, Skogg Gym, is a kettlebell, functional fitness gym. We've been at our current location in the industrial northwest area of Portland for about three years, but have been in business in Oregon for close to ten. We are only about four blocks from the river, but I don't know if we'd really be impacted by the construction noise from the dredging like those businesses right along the waterfront would be. It might not have a big impact on my business, but it would definitely have a huge impact on my recreation.

I'm a waterman. I paddleboard and I surf. When I'm not at work, I'm in the water. If they were actively dredging up contaminants from this whole stretch of the river, I wouldn't go into the water. No way. Once you start digging up something that's been covered up for years, like this has, you have no real idea what you'll find. Parts of the river have been shown by an EPA study in 2014 to actually be healing themselves. Why would we want to interfere with this natural process? We should just let nature run its own cleaning cycle in these parts of the river.

What would be a much better idea is to focus on a smaller area of the river which is known to be the most contaminated. If you run into problems, then they will be much easier to contain and have less impact on the surrounding area and on the businesses and recreation that depend on the river. It would be a good test sample to take before thinking about moving on with a larger project. Decisions about how to proceed after that would be based on real data and not just guesses. The EPA needs to step back and rethink its plan and consider instead taking a small step first. This would cost less money and be much less likely to hurt the river and those who depend on and love it.

Sincerely,

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Owner